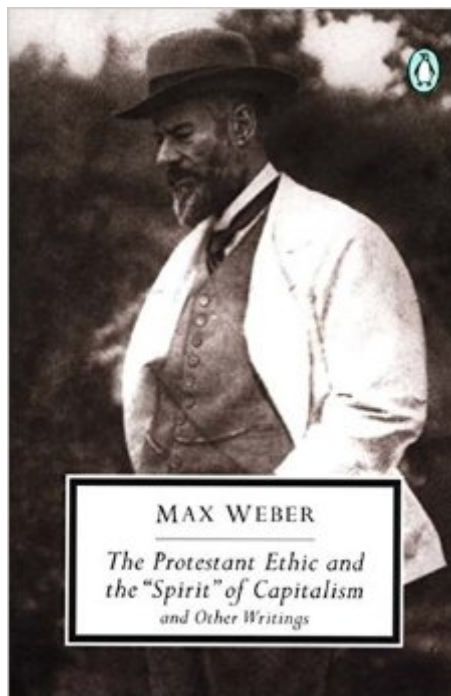


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The Protestant Ethic And The Spirit Of Capitalism: And Other Writings (Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics)



Synopsis

In *The Protestant Ethic*, Max Weber opposes the Marxist concept of dialectical materialism and relates the rise of the capitalist economy to the Calvinist belief in the moral value of hard work and the fulfillment of one's worldly duties. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics (Book 649)

Paperback: 464 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; unknown edition (April 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140439218

ISBN-13: 978-0140439212

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.7 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (29 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #10,223 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in [Books > History > World > Religious > Religion, Politics & State](#) #18 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Sociology](#) #18 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Church & State](#)

Customer Reviews

Weber's "Protestant Ethic" has here been published along with the author's responses to various reviews; and this is a good idea as it may be helpful in dispelling the misconceptions that arose from the "Weber thesis" and are still rampant. Weber primarily had to deal with interpretations of his work that took him to say that modern capitalism had its cause in the attitudes and working habits of certain minority groups, to wit the "Protestants" or "Puritans" of the early modern era. So it was Weber's primary aim in his "counter-reviews" to point out that he had made no such claim at all; in fact, he assumed that modern capitalism had its origin in various social, political und scientific developments of the West completely independent of Protestantism. In particular, he tried to refute two common prejudices: that modern capitalism arose from greed and avarice, or alternatively, from

industriousness. The Chinese, as far as we can tell, throughout history had been as industrious and hard-working as any people in the West, but failed to develop modern capitalism. What Weber's thesis was all about was a change of outlook of certain groups of people at the beginning of the modern era. He noted, that-largely as a result of religious beliefs and attitudes-some people rejected the age-old and still prevalent ideal of the "universal man" of sound erudition and refined taste, the "gentleman" ideal of the Renaissance, in favor of a completely different life goal, that of the "professional man". This reduction of all human interests to success in one's vocation, has-far from being the "cause" of modern capitalism-simply proved to be the optimal adaptation to the ecological niche created by it.

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